

Earth First!

action update

No compromise!

number 5 July 1993 20p

reclaim the land!

Sunday 4th July. 100 police, security guards and Tarmac workers faced 500 activists. Several people broke the Department of Transport's injunction, which had been gained two days before in the High Court at a cost of several hundred thousand pounds. Along with 500 other demonstrators the injunctees entered the site. Earlier they had formed a human chain around the site perimeter for a minute's silence as a Requiem for the Lost Landscape.

Those who broke the injunction may now face prison sentences and some may choose to go on a hunger strike. Others may go on non-custodial hunger strikes in support. All this will need support.

The Department of Roads said during the High Court hearing that it will be pursuing a claim for £1.9 million in damages. The injunctees may be held "jointly and severally liable" - i.e. one of the injunctees may be held liable for the actions of others they may never even have met. This is a peculiar judicial system we are operating under...

Contact Twyford Down Alert on 0703 611 561 for further information on the continuing Twyford Down campaign.



OXEAS WOOD SAVED!

The government has dropped its £300 million plans to drive a road through Oxeas Wood in south-east London. **THIS IS A MASSIVE VICTORY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT IN THIS COUNTRY!** The Department of Roads announced that 'the scheme was designed many years ago, and no longer meets our strict environmental criteria' (!!). The decision was obviously nothing to do with over a year's direct action at Twyford Down, the formation of the Oxeas Alliance (see EF! AU no 4), or the fact that 3,000 people had signed a pledge to 'Beat the Bulldozers'.

The bad news is that the DoT proposes to introduce a new scheme, which may be privately financed. One possibility is a deep-bored tunnel linking the Thames and the A2. A competition may be held to design a bridge across the Thames. The scheme will be starting from scratch but the DoT still envisages that the road will be operational by the year 2001.

The Oxeas Alliance still plans to hold a mass rally at Oxeas Wood on Sunday 31st July to re-launch the 'Beat the Bulldozer' pledge, and to celebrate this victory. Another important focus of the day will be to show our determination to fight any alternative road schemes the DoT may come up with. Campaigns against other road schemes around the country will also be discussed so **BE THERE!**

STOLEN PROPERTY

10th July Environmental activists removed mahogany furniture from Bonds store, a branch of the John Lewis Partnership in Norwich, took the furniture to the police station and handed it to the police, reporting it as stolen property. Despite written evidence of illegal extraction of mahogany from indigenous people's lands in Brazil, the women were arrested, strip searched and detained for 6 hours, before they were released without charge. The three activists immediately returned to the police station. This time the new inspector on duty agreed to look into their claim on the basis that handling goods taken illegally from another country is considered a crime under English law.

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Peace Camp
20th Sept**
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NOW!**
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A VISIT TO THE PALACE

On 6th July, 17 women climbed over the wall of Buckingham Palace garden in order to raise the issue of Britain's nuclear testing on the Shoshone people's lands in America. As British citizens we are all responsible for the actions of the government. Silence equals complicity. The media reported it as a test of Buckingham Palace's security.

Paper Monkey-Wrenching

The Malaysian Timber Industry was recently successfully taken to the Advertising Standards Authority. Their claim that the Malaysian forests are "One of the Best Conserved in the World" is clearly nonsense, and the advert has now been withdrawn. Apparently FineWood marketing, based in Brighton, have a 70,000ha concession in Sarawak, and are a significant importer of Malaysian timber to Britain.

ALICE IN TARMACLAND

Tarmac AGM 16th July. This year Tarmac's AGM was considerably more interesting than usual. The meeting was attended by shareholders with a conscience, who raised embarrassing questions relating to Tarmac's environmental policy, particularly relating to the hideous mess they have made of Twyford Down. At one stage, however, the Chair decreed that questions could only be asked after the vote. "Sentence first, verdict afterwards". Dreadlocks were banned from the meeting. Nevertheless many points were raised to prick consciences. Sir Eric Poulton, Chairman (sic) of Tarmac, stated that "we all respect the environment, we have to live in it" (III). This year's AGM lasted well over an hour, seriously interrupting the rich and powerful ones' drinking time. Security for the meeting was cameled out by Group 4. Further details of Group 4's involvement at Twyford Down can be obtained on Freephone 0800 440 000.



BANK ACTION

9th July. Notts EF! co-ordinated another bank action in Nottingham city centre. Lots of people in suits wandered around inside Barclays and Lloyds banks, decorating the place with banners, entertaining customers and staff with drumming and singing, and with loud pop music on a ghetto blaster. The message was successfully delivered to hundreds of bank users that it was much quieter at the Co-op Bank. The bank managers were agitated, upset and distressed. Questions were faxed to head office and answers received before the protesters left for a cup of tea.

For information on the debt crisis contact Lloyds and Midland Boycott, c/o Manchester University Students Union, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PR tel 0161 275 2930.

Whalley Quarry

12th July 1993 Another action protesting at proposals to enlarge Whalley Quarry to eat even further into the Mendips (see EF! AU no 4). Whalley Quarry is owned by Lord Hanson of multinational conglomerate HANSON TRUST. Environment Secretary John Gummer is expected to announce within weeks whether the extension to Whalley Quarry can go ahead. Quarrying in the South West is set to increase by 40% by 2011. Further information and details of future actions from South Somerset EF! 0935 33493

SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES

On 6th January Chris Cole walked into the British Aerospace factory in Stevenage and allegedly caused £500,000 of damage to military aircraft nosecones and other aircraft. He was released from Bedford Prison on strict bail conditions on 22nd June (he has to obey a 9pm-7am curfew, attend his local police station 5 days a week and not go onto any BAE property). His trial is set for 4th October at Luton Crown Court. Further information from BAEs Ploughshares, c/o NVRN 162 Holloway Road, London N7, 0865 201687.

mahogany action week

On Saturday 14th June, as part of the Mahogany Action Week, Manchester EF! re-visited Texas DIY. The continual lack of response to a set of highly reasonable demands concerning the cessation of the destruction of irreplaceable eco-systems and communities, lead to a slightly more insane action. A stencil bearing the slogan "DEAD RAINFOREST" was made and the message liberally painted over mahogany in the store. The police arrived with six vans and three cars! The artist was arrested along with another protester (for glueing a factually correct information leaflet to a mahogany table). All charges were dropped. Other activities included leafletting, talking to customers, trolley runs, moving timber around the store and re-labeling bar codes. Protesters were eventually ejected and were able to continue the protest outside. The cost to Texas DIY was 'thousands of pounds' according to their own staff. Manchester EF! have subsequently been contacted by Texas head office and asked not to do it again.

Norfolk Friends of the Earth organised a vigil and fast outside Bonds Department Store in Norwich. They are demanding that the parent company, John Lewis Partnership, suspend the purchase of Brazilian Mahogany immediately. The vigil started with a 11 day fast by Mark Simon which ended on June 12th. Since then the fast and vigil has been continued in relay. If you would like to help please contact Norfolk FoE on 0603 625 394. Meanwhile in Brazil the Parakana Indians who live in the Apyterewa reserve took justice into their own hands and destroyed all logging equipment and installations left inside the reserve. In the Xicrin reserve the loggers attempted to invade Indian lands but were stopped by FUNAI and the Federal Police. Things are hotting up. The pressure must be kept up on the timber industry to stop this murderous trade. Further information on the mahogany campaign on 0865 201706

FASLANE PEACE CAMP

Monday 20th September
Royal Navy Armament Depot, Coulport is the store for Britain's submarine launched nuclear weapons. Nuclear warheads are transported there monthly from Burghfield in the South of England. The MoD owns 3,000 acres of land in Coulport ravaged for nothing other than sheer overkill.

PROTEST. The aim is to blockade base traffic and delay work at the depot. Workshops and training will take place. Food and child minding will be catered for. For further information contact: Faslane peace camp, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire, Scotland, G84 8NT tel. 0436 820 901

GATHERING

The next gathering will be on the 11th and 12th of September at Earthworm, in Shropshire. Contact Nottingham EFi for further details on 0602 508073

NO M11 LINK

Peaceful Occupation Protest Green Man Roundabout Leytonstone E11, 17th July. The spirit of Twyford Down has reached Leytonstone. The M11 link would divide East London and destroy communities and homes in its path. Squatters are urgently needed to fill homes as they become vacant. For information on all aspects of the anti-M11 campaign contact PO Box 956, Leytonstone Delivery Office, 6 Joseph Ray Road, London E11 1AA. Phone 081 556 4111 for further details.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE

20th - 22nd September
Massive action in Manchester to show our contempt at the government's environmental bollocks. See EFi AU No 4. Contact Manchester EFi 061 225 7128.

NO ROADS WALK

18th - 25th September. People are needed to join this walk round all the road schemes in the north west. This will include an unofficial visit to Partnerships for Change (see below). Contact Walk for the Earth 0422 844 710.

JESMOND DENE FLOWERPOT TRIBE

12th July 1993. A day of action in defiance of Newcastle City Council's injunction stopping "people unknown" from trespassing on the construction site resulted in 14 arrests. The road is £12 million worth of folly and would destroy around 170 trees. Only preliminary works have started so far. Tree houses have already been constructed in several trees and activists are already living in some of the trees. The presence of the Flowerpot Tribe camp successfully deterred the council from moving in with chainsaws, but a 24 hour eviction notice was served on 16th July. More tree sitters are urgently needed now! Contact Newcastle EFi 091 276 2493, for latest details.

WALK FOR THE EARTH

27th - 30th August "small green forum" in beautiful Yorkshire countryside: relaxation, networking, fun, walking, plus local public event on the 30th. Contact 0422 844 710.

wensum and wyndham valleys

The Wensum Valley near Norwich is threatened by a link to the Norwich Northern Relief Road, one of three (III) ring roads planned by Norfolk County Council. The Save Wensum Valley campaign is holding a festival called "Music on the Line" with bands, stalls, festivities and a chance to see the Wensum Valley itself. It takes place at Anderson's Meadows from 11am till 7pm on Sunday 1st August. An action camp is planned to be set up in the Autumn to save the Wyndham Valley from the proposed A11 widening. For details contact N.E.N. on 0803 765 434.

ROADS NEWS

Birmingham Northern Relief Road This controversial road scheme is presently under consultation prior to a public enquiry (expected later this year). This would become the first stretch of motorway in the country to be built and financed by the private sector.

M25 widenings As well as huge roadworks indicating that work is already well underway on some stretches...consultation recently closed on the first stage of the planned widening of the M25 to 14 lanes. The DoT received 10,000 letters of objection and 8 letters of support.

Salisbury bypass The public enquiry into the planned Salisbury bypass is dragging on owing to vast numbers of objections, to the evident disappointment of the DoT, who had hoped it would be over by now!

Tin Hat bypass Oxford £40 million more that the DoT wants to waste on roads that are neither needed nor wanted. Douglas Hurd has written to the Roads Minister pointing out that "the financial and environmental objections are very strong".

DEVON ROADS MADNESS

In the West Country, a road project is looming which threatens to damage local communities and devastate the environment (destroying an ancient woodland, an area of species-rich wetland, and habitats for wildlife, including badger sets). The A30/303 road "improvement" is being passed off as a scheme to relieve traffic congestion on an already existing road, reduce air pollution and accidents etc etc. Sound familiar? A coalition of groups is opposing the project, including Somerset FoE, CPRE, South Somerset EFi and the Trust for Nature Conservation. Opponents of the Merton-Hinton stretch of the road (Public Enquiry pending this autumn), are appealing for support and information from groups in the West Country region. If you can help, or want further information, please contact them at: Honiton's Farm, Upottery, Honiton, Devon, EX14 9PF.



Valley of the ASPE

The Valley of the Aspe, after a brief reprieve from the bulldozers, is again under threat. Works on the road that will rip through the Pyrenean wilderness, home to the last bears in France, could start any day. The court decision declaring the works illegal was reversed on 7th July following a farcical Public Enquiry and Environmental Impact Assessment. Eric Petatkin, one of the most active campaigners in the Valley, has been imprisoned until March next year. Actions and occupations are starting from 14th July, and there will be an international action in the Valley on 15th August following Ecotopia. Other protests are to include a fast in Brussels at the EC, with people from every European country, probably in September. A representative is still needed from this country. If you want to do anything, please contact ASPE Campaign at Oxford EFi or contact Bureau Ecotopia, Malençant d'en Bas, 09350 Castex, France. tel. 01033 61 69 85 53. Letters of support can be written to Eric Petatkin, no. 1736 N, Centre de Detention - BP01, 24190 Neuville sur l'Isle, France.

SKYE BRIDGE

The campaign is currently under review. It is hoped to build up support in Scotland. Further actions will be happening. Contact Oxford EFi for further details 0865 201 706.



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This action update was prepared in Oxford, and printed in Manchester.

In future it is hoped that it will be edited by different EFI groups around the country. The next group will be decided at the gathering in September.

Please write with comments, suggestions, abuse etc. Letters will not be published, at least while the Action Update is in its present form, but comments will be noted and hopefully incorporated in future editions....

The purpose of the Action Update is to report on non-violent direct actions (not exclusively EFI actions) happening around the country at any time and to publicise forthcoming actions. This is produced merely to entertain you, while you drink your bedtimemon-cash crop juice. Do not bring it as a reason of reading this. Leave it to others more desperate than yourself. All will be well.

More detail on the issues involved will be covered by "Do or Die", available from any EFI group.

To get articles in the next issue, send photos to Oxford EFI NOW! Thanks for the help on this issue....

No compromise!

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